



## **LEADERSHIP LOUISVILLE LUNCHEON SPEECH**

**Mayor Mitch Landrieu  
City of New Orleans**

August 23, 2016

*\*Remarks as prepared for delivery*

To start off with, I want to talk about the terrible flooding in Louisiana.

It is the worst natural disaster to hit the United States since Hurricane Sandy. Over just a few days, almost seven trillion gallons of rain fell on the affected parishes in Louisiana; that is enough to fill more than ten million Olympic-size swimming pools.

Thirteen people are dead and although New Orleans was not affected, it is likely that over 100,000 homes have been damaged across 26 Louisiana parishes.

Tonight, thousands of our brothers and sisters will stay on cots in shelters across the state. Many lost everything.

Imagine five feet of water rushing into your home. All your family photo albums swept away, your house gutted, and a whole lifetime of possessions in a huge, stinking wet pile in your front yard. So with this in mind, know the need is great. Please go to [nola.gov](http://nola.gov) and donate to our 'Pay It Forward Fund'.

Give what you can. Thank you.

Thank you for having me in Louisville.

I look at your beautiful neighborhoods hugging the Ohio River, along with the French in your name and the fleur de lis in your flag...

I feel right at home!

And since the beginning, our two cities have been connected.

Indeed, it was 1670 when French explorer de La Salle traveled down the Ohio River. He was the first European to see the area around Louisville.

A decade later, de La Salle would go down the Mississippi, claiming what would be New Orleans for King Louis XIV.

And so it has been.

From the 504 to the 502 - our two cities have been on parallel paths 700 miles apart - both making a mark on our beloved country.

700 miles apart, but at the same root of American music - Bill Monroe, the 'Father of Bluegrass', was born just a couple of hours outside of Louisville, while Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong pioneered jazz from New Orleans.

700 miles apart, but in the same struggle for equality – Abraham Lincoln started his life just down I-65 from here.

And nearly 150 years later, from a church in New Orleans, a young preacher named Martin Luther King Jr. launched the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

It was Kentuckian Robert Penn Warren who captured the essence of Louisiana politics in his seminal work – All the King's Men.

And of course, our most famous street is Bourbon Street, but I like that up here in Kentucky bourbon is not just a name.

I brought up a few bottles of New Orleans rum and I am bringing back a few more bottles of Kentucky Bourbon...

Should have brought an extra suitcase.

Besides our shared appreciation of rum and bourbon, New Orleans and Louisville are also cities on the cutting edge. We pride ourselves on being our nation's most immediate laboratories for innovation and change.

Mayor Fischer, as some have said, is an entrepreneur and CEO who just happens to be Mayor.

He gets that technological innovation makes cities better, and the Metro Mayor and I are fellow travelers.

He appointed Louisville's first Chief Innovation Officer and created your Office of Performance Improvement which manages 'LouieStat'.

In New Orleans, we call it ResultsNOLA and the Office of Performance Accountability, but they do the same thing. With their help, we count everything: from filling potholes to how much blight we are taking down. Since we implemented these new data and accountability systems at City Hall, services are being delivered faster and at a lower cost. In both New Orleans and Louisville, Code For America Fellows have helped us incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century technology into that process.

Now I hear y'all even have hundreds of residents learning cutting edge skills through *Code Louisville*. That is very cool.

Mayor Fischer is also a national leader at the City Accelerator Project on Municipal Innovation and both New Orleans and Louisville have hosted Bloomberg Innovation Teams.

And with our partners, we're together covering everything from reducing murder to fighting blight to combating veteran homelessness and minimizing unnecessary ambulance trips to the emergency room.

The goal is to find new solutions to age-old problems; not just what to do, everyone knows what to do. The tough part is figuring out actually how to do it.

Here in Louisville the results are clear and inspiring: 47,000 new jobs created in five years. You've gone from a big budget deficit to a surplus and new programs like SummerWorks are blowing up, going from employing 200 students in 2011 to more than 2,500 today.

It's clear that Mayor Fischer isn't slowing down. He's expanding his circle, getting advice from the *One Love Louisville* Youth Implementation Team and new programs like Pivot to Peace are helping to stop the cycle of violence, prevent retributions by intervening at Louisville hospitals when people get shot. We've started up a similar program.

The best is yet to come. And I look forward to stealing more really good ideas from Mayor Fischer.

Louisville and New Orleans are also great examples of how sports, arts and culture can become a catalyst for economic development and improving quality of life

We've got Mardi Gras. You've got the Derby. We've got Bourbon Street, you've got Whiskey Row.

Both cities annually attract visitors from around the world and the impact is incredible.

In New Orleans, last year we hosted 10 million visitors who spent \$7 billion, which means \$76 million in sales taxes, up 23 percent from the year before.

We now have a whopping 36,478 cultural industry jobs. That is a 53 percent increase from just a few years ago, double the job growth in all other industries. Now, the cultural sector is a larger source of employment than private healthcare, education, government and retail sectors.

All those cultural economy jobs pay out \$1.3 billion in wages, and with 1,735 cultural businesses ranging from restaurants, art galleries to performance venues and architectural firms the impact is felt both wide and deep. That is why New Orleans was just named the #1 best city for creatives.

So I think that no one in this room will disagree that investing in a thriving, authentic cultural sector is a critical opportunity no matter where you are.

Indeed, the US Conference of Mayors, where I currently serve as vice President, has urged the next president to not only establish a cabinet level position for the arts and culture, but to double funding for the National Endowment of the Arts to \$1 per capita.

We also have to realize that to have a vibrant economy, cultural or otherwise, places like Louisville and New Orleans need two things in particular: good infrastructure and public safety.

This should be a no brainer.

Investing in the nation's infrastructure should be a top priority for both political parties.

The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that by 2020 over \$3.6 trillion will be needed for infrastructure. The burden of this huge need is felt most by America's cities. Local governments own and operate 78 percent of the nation's road miles and half of the nation's bridges. Plus, we're growing, 66 million more people will move to cities and metro areas over the next 30 years.

And look no further than events in places like Flint, Michigan, which show that neglect, deferred maintenance and trying to run key infrastructure on the cheap is deadly. New Orleans also perfectly exemplifies this crisis. We are one of the fastest growing major cities in America, but our streets and sewer systems are falling apart.

Increased funding for every city would not only meet a great need, but also create jobs. And if we fail to act, the economy will continue to suck wind and we will continue to put Band-Aids on a huge system that needs a big time overhaul.

Besides infrastructure, there is no bigger issue facing our cities and this great nation than public safety.

Overall, the events in San Bernardino, Orlando, Boston, and elsewhere have shown that local public safety, national security and protecting the homeland has really become one thing.

We can't be stuck fighting the last war. The terrorist threat is changing. The fight abroad in places like Afghanistan and Iraq is only half the battle.

To really keep Louisville and New Orleans safe in this new era, we need to go full circle. Connect the dots to create an unbreakable ring of protection with the focused knowledge and resources of all local, state and federal authorities.

Although the uniforms may be different, we are all fighting the same war and it is more important than ever to be tightly coordinated.

Now, often the most important intelligence is coming from the bottom up. Lone wolves inspired by ISIS are a big time threat.

So we need strong local departments that can be eyes and ears on the street with cutting edge predictive technology that can identify threats before things go bad.

This should be a national priority, and we have money at the federal level to pay for it.

Indeed, over the last 15 years we have spent \$122B building public safety capacity and local police departments, but it has been overseas for places like Medellin, Kabul, and Baghdad.

There is wisdom in this investment. To protect our interests abroad we need law and order.

So this is not an either/or situation, we need to do both. Both support our allies, maintain the best military fight force in world history, and strengthen local police here in the United States.

If we do this, we will create a remarkable bulwark against criminals and terrorists. That is what will make us truly safe. We need to go full circle.

To that end, President Obama has proposed major new resources for local law enforcement and Congressional Democrats have supported these efforts.

When listening to Republican politicians, you would think there was consensus on this issue of supporting the police.

They say 'blue lives matter' and Republican leaders like Mitch McConnell says he is "grateful for the service of every police officer." He calls on all Americans to "pay tribute to the local, state, and federal law-enforcement officers who keep our country and our communities' safe."

And while former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani at the Republican National Convention brags about turning "the crime capital of America to... the safest large city in America", we should all remember the details about how that actually happened.

When Mr. Giuliani was Mayor, the federal government through President Clinton's COPS program was spending billions to pay the salaries for over 100,000 local police officers.

But today, nearly all that COPS funding is gone. In 2015, just 915 officers were hired through the COPS program. 915!

And despite big talk about support for police, Republicans in Congress have repeatedly voted "No" to the COPS program.

Republicans shouldn't talk big about supporting law enforcement, but then cut their funding.

As Americans we should not just talk the talk, but walk the walk.

Congress should fully fund the COPS program at \$4 billion and help local governments like New Orleans and Louisville hire and equip more police officers.

But at the same time, it will take more than additional resources to resolve the current crisis in American policing. We need reform. If we get this right, the police and the community will really become one. Everyone focused on stopping violent criminals who mean to do us harm.

To this end, we are implementing the most comprehensive police reform in American history through a consent decree monitored by a federal judge.

We're holding everyone accountable.

Now we insist on transparency. That means body cameras. That means partnering with the FBI for independent police use of force investigations. That means re-training officers for community policing, crisis intervention and de-escalation training. That means growing the department so there are more high performing police officers on the streets and in our neighborhoods. New Orleans and Louisville have about 1200 sworn officers, but we need more.

However, making our cities safer goes beyond drastically improving the police department. That is why we've introduced NOLA FOR LIFE, our

aggressive and comprehensive murder reduction strategy.

Through NOLA FOR LIFE, we've combined the entire criminal justice system into one Multi Agency Gang Unit.

Led by NOPD, this special unit also includes State Troopers, the Sheriff's Office, the State Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole, the US Attorney, US Marshalls, DEA, ATF, FBI, and our District Attorney.

It is our new way to not only fight organized violent criminals, but also prevent terrorism.

Like I was saying before – our uniforms may be different, but we are one big team with one big fight.

But really, NOLA FOR LIFE is about prevention.

People need hope for the future and we can't leave anyone behind.

Currently, in New Orleans 52 percent of African American men are not working.

This is unsustainable and we must change.

We need to connect people to jobs, and ironically, there are lots of people hiring, if you've got the right skills.

So we have invested in a first rate jobs training program called STRIVE.

STRIVE creates pathways to prosperity through a crash course on everything professional. And it can be intense, but gets people ready to go to work and connected to potential employers.

Earlier this month we celebrated the 9<sup>th</sup> graduating class of STRIVE. We've connected hundreds of mostly African American men to jobs. Eighty percent are still working after six months. That's how we know it works.

In a similar vein, we also have a reentry program so citizens returning from prison never go back.

Part of this is 'banning the box' that requires job applicants to reveal their criminal record on the written application. Now, an individual applying for a job at the city with a criminal record can get an interview, explain their past, and say what they have to offer.

Because of all these public safety initiatives, we are now seeing progress. The work speaks for itself and is supported by reams of data.

The Multi Agency Gang Unit has indicted 118 gang or group members and the word is out. In 2011, 55 percent of New Orleans murders were gang or group related. Now, we've cut that in half. Violent gangs are getting the message: stop shooting... or we are coming for you and we're going to get you.

Last year, crime was down, and half way through 2016 we were again on track to have the lowest number of murders since 1971.

In the first half of 2016, some other crime ticked back up – especially armed robbery and carjacking. And now in the second half of the year, murder is also up.

But by moving dozens of officers from behind desks to the street and funding more overtime we've launched the equivalent of a nearly 100-officer surge on the street. Now in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, armed robbery is down and after a really bad July, the murder rate is again slowing down.

That is the approach we take in New Orleans writ large.

If there is a problem, find a way or make one. Adjust, change, roll with the punches, be entrepreneurial, try new things. Be hard on the problem, soft on the people. That is the "new" New Orleans way.

We know how to get better fast and how to win, but we still have a long way to go.

I am aware that today we sit in the Gateway to the South and that I am Mayor of a deep-south city.

Unfortunately, we in the South have often found ourselves on the wrong side of history, especially as it pertains to equity, civil rights and race.

But the South that I know and understand is better than that. Let me tell you about the South I know.

The South that represents my beliefs and those that I am sure we share are faith and family and country. Mine is the South made up of people gathering on front porches and at kitchen tables. It is the South of “good morning” and “good evening” greetings. Great food, great music, lazy rivers.

It is the South where our parents taught us the difference between right and wrong. It is the South where we lend a helping hand and a caring ear. It is the South where we are held accountable for our actions. It is the South where we learn to treat others like we want to be treated. Not just those who look like us, but all of us.

But in our cities and across the nation, trust is sometimes hard to come by. We may live just blocks away from each other, but are often worlds apart.

We need to change. We can't move forward with strength if we are divided and if the past is holding us back. “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Like y'all say - ‘One Love Louisville’.

Over many years, we created these problems, so we can fix them.

And cities that will attract people, create jobs and grow wealth will be cities that are open and inviting, tolerant, entrepreneurial, creative, healthy and smart. And most importantly culturally rich and authentic.

But the future does not belong to any city that closes its doors to those seeking refuge.

The future does not belong to any city that closes its heart to our Hispanic brothers and sisters. Or to our Muslim neighbors who assert their religious liberty to choose his or her faith, or to the LGBTQ community, who to this day, remains under assault.

The future does not belong to a city who closes itself off to young African American boys and girls who still feel left out of the mainstream.

Or to working class people left behind by an economy that feels rigged and rewards only a few.

And finally, the future can never belong to sleepy southern towns that just kick back and think old symbols of racism are no big deal.

So this is a time for choosing.

Cities like ours must move boldly and courageously.

We have already come so far.

Now we just have to keep going.